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ABSTRACT

This book examines issues in American higher education, especially the competing needs and desires of students, professors, administrators, and the larger society. Higher education is becoming mass education, with most students coming from working-class backgrounds and seeking an education that will enable them to get a job; such students have no interest in a classic liberal arts education and do not plan to go on to graduate school. In contrast, most faculty members are products of elite graduate schools, which have insulated them from the needs of this population, leaving them ill-equipped to handle this changing student body. The book, the result of a year of interviewing students, graduate students, faculty, and adjunct teachers around the country, urges loosening the grip of professional discipline-based guilds, placing more emphasis on teaching than on research for most professors, and having more societal concern with what a college degree consists of. Individual chapters address these issues in the context of students, classrooms, graduate students, professors, tenure, professors and society, history standards, adjuncts and community colleges, and society and higher education. (Individual chapters contain references.) (DB)

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